23. Desirability of throwing open for cultivation portions of the Karikattur and Rani Reserves.

Mr. R. Krishna Panikkar (Member, Peermade taluk) said that the increasing scarcity of arable land was being keenly felt by the ryots of the Peermade taluk. Steps were not being taken for the registry of lands in the occupation of the ryots and when they were registered, assessment for many years would be in arrears and the poor ryots would be put to much difficulty. In the proposed reserves there were large areas unfit for forest purposes but useful for cultivation. Such areas in the Karikattur and Rani Reserves might be ordered to be registered in the names of the ryots having private registered holdings in the vicinity. There were many habitations in the Alapra Reserve also. He complained that the excessive tharavila fixed had induced the ryots to convert some of their puduval and pandarapattom lands into jenmom lands. Very many suits were recently decided in the Kottayam District Court in which the evidence on the part of the Sirkar to show that the lands were not of the jenmom tenure was scanty and the ryots got what they wished for. He therefore prayed that tharavila, thadivila and assessment might be reduced in the interests of the revenue to the State. People also suffered owing to the unsympathetic behaviour of the subordinates of the Forest Department.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

24. Exclusion of the cardamom growing area from the control of the Forest Department and placing the same under the Revenue Department.

Mr. Sanyasi Mallayan Chetty (Member, Devicolam taluk) said that the action of the Forest Department, in enforcing their rules regarding the reserves on the cardamom growing area and in realising fees for cattle grazing, had caused great inconvenience to the cardamom ryots. The Government were not profited by the introduction of those rules in the High Ranges, while the difficulties the ryots were put to were very many. He therefore prayed that the cardamom growing areas might be transferred from the control of the Forest Department to that of the Revenue Department. He also requested permission for the free grazing of their cattle, for felling timber for building purposes and for using fire-arms for the protection of life and property.

Dewan's reply.—Noted. The question of the separation of the lands suitable for cardamom cultivation from the Cardamom Hills and Periyar Reserves has been engaging the attention of Government for some time past. Recently, I held a conference on the subject with the Conservator of Forests and the Commissioner, Devicolam, and as a result of that conference, the Government have decided that the two areas should be separated and placed under the independent jurisdiction of the Conservator and the Commissioner. With a view to effect this separation, Mr. Robinson has been asked to arrange, in conjunction with the Conservator of Forests, for a convenient and natural boundary being selected separating the area that may be assigned for cardamom cultivation and that to be retained as a Forest Reserve under the control of the Forest Department, and send up a clear sketch of the boundaries. These officers have not yet been able to make the joint inspection and send up their report. They will be asked to do the inspection with the least possible delay. As soon as their report and the sketch are received, the area fit for cardamom cultivation will be formally disafforested and transferred to the jurisdiction and control of the Devicolam Commissioner.

25. Desirability of throwing open for cultivation certain lands adjoining habitations now included in the reserved forests, and of closing the elephant track near the Velleamattam Reserve.

Mr. Chacko Thomman (Member, Todupuzha taluk) said that many places suitable for cultivation but useless for reservation were included in the reserves. He requested that about 500 acres of land in the Manakad pakuthi, lying contiguous to habitations, which were now included in the reserves, should be thrown open for cultivation. He also prayed that, to prevent the destruction of crops by the inroads of the elephants through the Velleamattam Reserve, the track towards the south of the Uppukunnumala might be ordered to be closed.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

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